



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on January 10, 2017 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES
January 10, 2017

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
Kendel Bryant, Vice Chair
Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
Sterling Martin
Aubin Guinness
Ed Barnhart
Heidi Pruess
Abe Early
Peter Engels
Doug Burnett
Mary Johnson
Brian Cox
Jim Garges, Director of Park and Recreation

PRC Absent:

Tonya Phifer

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Each Commissioner introduced themselves and the park region they represent.

Public Appearance:

Richard Shaw: Richard came before the PRC to acknowledge the progress being made on addressing senior concerns at the Methodist Home Recreation Center. Mr. Shaw also shared information because of his community poll regarding the Linda Lake Neighborhood Park. A handout was provided to members of the PRC and staff.

Proclamations and Awards: None

Presentations:

Ramsey Creek Beach Update: Greg Clemmer, Park Superintendent, presented the 2016 Beach Season Report on Ramsey Creek Beach. This presentation covered data on visitation, revenue and expenses, challenges, crime statistics and safety. Also, included in the presentation was operational improvements on staffing, amenities and hours. This presentation is included in the January 2017 PRC Minutes Binder (**Item 4a**) housed in the Director's office and can also be viewed here: [2016 Beach Season Report – Ramsey Creek Beach](#)

Director Garges commented on how good staff handled the Ramsey Creek Beach operation and said the Huntersville Police Chief was also very pleased. The PRC also commented on how well the first season progressed and improved as well as how pleased they were with the overall improvements at Ramsey Creek Park. PRC commended staff on their professionalism when addressing citizen complaints and harsh opposition. Commissioner Bryant shared that one positive way of addressing complaints about the beach was to invite them to meet at the beach for a conversation.

Lifeguards: Terri Stowers, Director of Community and Recreation Center Services, shared that the Department is seeking to hire lifeguards for the upcoming summer season. The Department will provide opportunity to improve swimming skills and will waive the lifeguard certification fee for those who agree to sign a 90-day contract. This fee has been a deterrent in the past when hiring lifeguards. The Department needs lifeguards at the Aquatic Center, Double Oaks and Ramsey Beach.

Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments: None

Director's Report:

Director Garges reported on the following:

FY18 Budget: Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator and Director Garges shared the following information on the FY18 budget process:

- The County adopted a zero-based budgeting process and P&R is the second agency to go through this process. The Department has completed the staffing model and is currently completing the operating expense portion which includes the operating expense for new facilities. The budget office will be doing budget comparisons of FY17 current level budgeting to FY18 zero based budgeting. The Department will meet with the Office of Management and Budget on February 13 to discuss the findings before they go to the Executive Team.
- BOCC Retreat will be January 26 – 27 at which the County Manager will share some insights regarding the budget process.
- On March 30th, all Department Directors will present their budget request to the County Manager and her Executive Team.
- On May 25th, the County Manger will present the FY18 budget to all the Departments.

- The public hearing date will be set at the BOCC Retreat and the Straw Vote meeting will follow.
- Jim would like to have Monica Allen share her presentation with the PRC on the Demographics in the community and what the community will look like in 2030.
- The County has hired their own economist.
- The County will be conducting a property reappraisal and are working on communicating and preparing to address citizen complaints and questions in a quick and efficient manner.
- There will be more money in the budget for FY19-23 Capital projects but also more competition for project funding. Included in the Departments FY19-23 CIP funding will be \$80 million for the two regional recreation centers. The Department will be also asking for the ONA to run new facilities.
- Director Garges encouraged the PRC to continue to advocate, support the Manager's budget and support the Department's projects.
- The County is financially healthy and the revenue is high.
- Concern was expressed by Commissioner Cox that the County under budgeted regarding property tax. The County has the money to fund and operate P&R facilities.
- Deferred Maintenance funding of \$4.5 million will be placed into an account designated as Capital Preservation. Capital Reserve Accounts will be discontinued (except golf and nature preserves) and gross revenue will go into the general fund with a percentage (not yet determined) being moved into the Capital Preservation account to supplement the \$4.5 million.
- Concern and disappointment was expressed by the PRC over losing the Capital Reserve Accounts where the Department could hold funds for specific identified needs.
- Commissioner Cox requested the Fees and Charges committee meet to discuss the discontinuation of the Capital Reserve Accounts.

Memorial Stadium Changes: Director Garges shared Information regarding American Legion Memorial Stadium as follows:

- Brunton Smith and his son, Marcus have put in a bid for a major-league soccer franchise. ALMS is the intended venue.
- Director Garges said the most important things for the PRC, the community and the Department to understand and to advocate for is:
 - Keeping the name of the stadium "American Legion Memorial Stadium"
 - Protect and recognize the history of ALMS, a venue built to honor those who lost their lives in WWI.
 - Incorporate recognition of all branches of the armed forces and veterans
 - Engage the community
 - Engage the Historic Landmarks Commission
- If the stadium is renovated for MLS, Grady Cole will come down.
- When/if an agreement is made with Brunton Smith it will be brought to a public meeting where the PRC and other citizens can speak for or against the agreement.
- ALMS cannot be demolished by deed restriction, owned by the County.

Eastway Regional Recreation Center: The community process will begin with a community engagement festival at Garinger High School on Saturday, March 4. The launch of this type of

community meeting and associated project website will be the style for community meetings going forward.

Greenways Foundation: An initial meeting was held to begin the process of establishing a 501c-3 focused on getting the greenway system built out. A kick-off event will be planned and all were invited to participate.

PRC Chair Report: Chair Powell and other Commissioners discussed the following:

- Chair Powell reminded all to provide her with topics they would like to discuss at the February 18 PRC retreat.
- **Invasive Plants:** Chair Powell felt strongly that advocating to the BOCC for funding to combat invasive plants in our nature preserves is critical for the health of our nature preserves and parks. In conversation with Commissioner Dumont Clarke, she was advised to make this ask now.
- Commissioner Cox suggested that it might be better to advocate for funding for a specific need or program rather than advocating for an increase in unspecified funding.
- The PRC were encouraged to begin reaching out to their assigned Board of County Commissioner to begin advocating and sharing recommendations.
- Several Commissioners expressed the need to reflect on the role of the PRC in advance of the retreat and how the PRC might better be able to effect change and have a greater impact in the new year.
- Commissioner McMannis reported that Commissioner Velma Leake attended the recent Sr. Citizen AC meeting. Also, extended an invitation to volunteer with the Sr. Games.

Consent Items

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to approved all consent items, including the PRC minutes of November 10, 2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.